Basic Awards Writing

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Resources

- NAVMEDCEN SANDIEGO INST 1650.1J
- Guide for Successful Awards Writing
- NMCSD Awards & Ceremonies intranet page
  - Awards tracker
  - FAQ’s
  - USN Awards site
- Good and bad examples passed down from your friends!

So, Why Give an Award?

- Recognize sustained superior performance
- Recognize significant events

Personal Military Awards

- Letter of Appreciation
- Letter of Commendation
- Military Outstanding Volunteer Service Medal
- Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal
- Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal
- Meritorious Service Medal
- Legion of Merit

Civilian Personnel Awards

- Spot awards
- Special Act Awards
- Beneficial Suggestion Awards
- Time Off
- Performance Based Awards
- Length of Service Awards/Certificate
- Recognition (Civilian of the quarter/year)

Parts of an Award

- OPNAV 1650/3
  - Personal Awards Recommendation
    - Name, previous award information
  - Summary of Action
    - Listing of significant accomplishments that led to the award being presented
- Citation
  - The eloquently written thing that gets read at the awards ceremony
  - The citation **mirrors** the SOA, but should remain **specific** and **powerful** without being watered down.

1. Choose the Right Award

Meritorious Service Medal	The individual recommended for this medal must have distinguished themselves through exceptionally meritorious conduct in performing outstanding service. Managing significant monetary or personnel assets. Department Head or Director level responsibility. Significant monetary savings, initiative, creativity, impact on policies, procedures and command mission accomplishment. Other benefits to command mission, base/fleet operations, their corps, the Medical Department, the Navy or their profession.
Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal	This award is given for meritorious service or achievement, which is well above the performance usually expected of a person of that grade or rate. Serving in a billet of higher level than current rank. Performance extends beyond the level of responsibility. Significant monetary savings, initiative, creativity, impact on policies, procedures and command mission accomplishment.
Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal	This award is given to enlisted and officer the grade of lieutenant commander below. To get this award, you must do more than just your regular job. Extending ones-self beyond the limits of the position.

2. Write the Summary of Action

- Opening and closing paragraphs:
  - These must “sell” why the award is merited
  - Begin with a strong statement of why the individual meets award criteria
  - Conclude with a convincing statement

- Bullets:
  - Describe accomplishments
  - Cause/Effect
  - Quantify where possible ($ saved, %’s, #’s)
  - Avoid generalities & excessive superlatives
  - Provide objective summary, specific examples

3. Write the Citation

Keep the audience in mind (spouse, parents, etc). The citation tells a good story of why the award is given.

- Focus on 2 or 3 major accomplishments
  - Cite specific, memorable/impactful details
  - Make the details interesting
- Use the past tense
- Remember that each type of award has specific opening and closing statements, and there are line limitations for each type of award

Remember this is a public document. Picture the citation framed and on the wall of that Sailor. Make it worthy of such a place.

TIME LINES FOR AWARDS:

This means to the Awards and Ceremonies Office prior to the official detachment date.

- LM & Above: 120 days (SecNav/CNO)
- MM, NC, NA: 60 days
- MOVSM: 30 days
- FLOC: 30 days
- LOA: 10 days

Specific Achievements: no later than 60 days after the event.

"For SEPARATIONS or RETIREMENTS, lead time requirements are prior to the commencement of the periods of permissive TDY and terminal leave."

Translation:

Retirements / Separations -
VERIFY if the awardee is taking PTDY and/or terminal leave.
For a NAM or NCM, the award package is due to the NMCSD Awards Office 60 days prior to start of PTDY/Terminal Leave--NOT 60 days prior to the member's approved separation date or retirement date. Again late submission letters are required when the award does not meet the lead time requirement.

The NMCSD Awards Office experiences a HIGH RATE of returned awards from the US Postal Service.
A large number of these are Separation / Retirement Awards.
VERIFY a PERMANENT MAILING ADDRESS for the member's award. (The chain of command for the awardee should ask the member for this information -- prior to their detachment.
Please do NOT just provide the member's recall address, when assigned to NMCSD)

Common Missteps

- Be TIMELY
- Always put the most impactful items up front
  - SOA/Citation lacks an initial “punch” because the most impactful parts of candidates actions are buried deep in the write-up of the SOA/Citation
- Be Specific
- Avoid Use of acronyms

Let’s review a few examples:

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